

REPORT  
OF THE  
BOARD OF MANAGERS OF THE NATIONAL ASYLUM  
FOR DISABLED VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS.

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FEBRUARY 26, 1869.—Referred to the Committee on Military Affairs and ordered to be printed.

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*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives:*

The board of managers of the National Asylum for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers have the honor to submit the annual report of their operations for the year ending December 31, 1868, in accordance with the act of Congress establishing the institution.

As has been before reported, there are three permanent branches of the asylum, each under the charge of a deputy governor and subordinate officers, to wit: one near Augusta, Maine, known as the eastern branch; one near Dayton, Ohio, known as the central branch; and one near Milwaukee, Wisconsin, known as the northwestern branch.

THE EASTERN BRANCH, NEAR AUGUSTA, MAINE.

On the 8th of January, 1868, this branch met with a very considerable loss by an accidental fire which burnt the principal building of the establishment. The fire originated from a defective chimney flue connected with the furnace, and broke out about 9 o'clock at night, with the wind raging with great violence, so that it was impossible to save any considerable portion of the movable property of the asylum. The weather being very severe, much suffering occurred to the beneficiaries. All the buildings but the one in which the fire originated were saved by the use of the powerful steam fire-engine belonging to the asylum. Governor Smythe, of New Hampshire, one of the board of managers being detailed for that purpose, was promptly on the ground after the fire, and caused all the inmates, save about 100 who could be accommodated in the remaining buildings, to be removed to Philadelphia and to the State Soldiers' Home at Newark, New Jersey, where they have been temporarily cared for. The misfortune was still further enhanced by the fact that at the time we were deprived of the services of our efficient deputy governor, Major Nathan Cutler, who was lying dangerously sick from disease arising from injuries and wounds received in the service. The loss to the institution was very considerable, but by no means irreparable.

Congress, with its accustomed liberality to the disabled soldier, having appropriated \$25,000 towards replacing the building, contracts were immediately made and preparations begun to rebuild; bricks for the purpose being made in a brick-yard established by the asylum for that purpose, on the premises, so that we were enabled to commence building on the 1st day of July, and the work was pressed with such celerity and

promptness by the contractor, General Natt Head, of New Hampshire, that, at the end of the year, three brick buildings, 100 feet by 50, three stories high, including Mansard roof, covered with slate, substantially fire-proof, were finished, and a fourth one of the same size, which was unfinished at the time of the fire and considerably injured by it, repaired and all fitted up in the most approved manner, heated by steam, furnished with the most serviceable cooking and laundry apparatus, with boilers and engine-house and coal-house, at an expense not exceeding \$65,000, giving the most ample accommodation for 600 men, together with school-rooms, hospital, and chapel, with quarters for officers, and the necessary offices and storage. The board believe they may challenge, in this work, comparison with any public or private work for economy, despatch, solidity, and capacity.

Under a resolution of the board, the soldiers from the temporary homes in the New England and contiguous States and from the Home at Newark, New Jersey, are about to be removed to the eastern branch, and this branch of the asylum will be at once filled. Notwithstanding the loss of the buildings and proper accommodations, 343 disabled volunteer soldiers and sailors have been supported and aided in this branch during the year.

#### CENTRAL BRANCH, NEAR DAYTON, OHIO.

Under the efficient and zealous efforts of the local manager, Hon. Lewis B. Gunckel, secretary of the board, the work of construction at this branch has gone on with great rapidity and economy during the year, and we believe will be completed early in the spring. Our buildings at this branch are sufficient to take care of 1,000 disabled soldiers with every necessity and comfort of life. There are workshops established on the premises; very many of the inmates are taught bookkeeping and fitted to earn their own living and become independent of the asylum notwithstanding their disability. There is connected with this branch a large and valuable library and reading-room, furnished with all the principal newspapers of the United States, for which we are indebted to the proverbial liberality of the press. A most valuable portion of the library was the gift of Mrs. ——— Porter, of ——— volumes, most beautifully bound, and selected with great care, and specially adapted to the needs of the soldiers. A much less than merited resolution of thanks will be found in the report of the board attached hereto for the munificent donation of this lady, who, having lost a noble and gallant son in the service of his country, has lavished the mother's love she bore to him upon his disabled companions in arms in a manner which calls forth their and our highest sensibilities of gratitude.

The grounds have been laid out and are being improved and beautified by the labor of the soldiers.

The religious and moral instruction at this branch, under the direction of Chaplain Earnshaw, has been of the most faithful and satisfactory character.

A printing office has been established here, at which, hereafter, all the printing necessary in carrying on the business of the board of managers and all branches of the asylum will be done.

A shop has been established on the premises, in which are kept all the small articles necessary for the beneficiaries; the profits of which are devoted to the increase of the library.

In short, everything has been done which lay in the power of the managers to make this institution what it should be—a home for these

disabled men, to which they shall become attached, and in which they shall find every comfort and convenience to make them contented and happy during their lives, or to fit them, if they choose and are capable, for employment elsewhere, by which with their pensions they may make themselves independent and useful citizens.

In this branch there have been supported or aided during the year 1,249 disabled men; of these there are 114 with one arm only, and 159 with one leg only, being, it is believed, a greater number of one-armed and disabled men than were ever before assembled in one institution. In this connection the board beg leave to call the attention of Congress to the very valuable statistics of the whole number of men cared for or aided by the board of managers during the year, amounting in all to 3,917; the various services to which they belong; their disabilities and diseases; the number of deaths; the ages of the beneficiaries; their domestic relations; and their nativity. This statement has been prepared by Mr. Gunckel, our secretary, with great care, and will afford some very interesting data.

We have lost during the year by death, from consumption and debility, arising from wounds contracted in the service, the devoted late deputy governor, E. E. Tracy, who has given his life to his country in his care for his fellow-soldiers.

The board appointed as the present deputy governor Colonel E. F. Brown.

#### THE NORTHWESTERN BRANCH, NEAR MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN.

The buildings at this branch, necessary to carry on its operations, are in process of construction, and will be completed, it is believed, by the 1st of June next. They have been built under the direction and superintendence of Dr. E. B. Walcott, local manager at Milwaukee, who has carried on the work with great zeal and assiduity; and when completed, he reports will be able to accommodate a thousand men, with proper offices for the institution, and quarters for the officers. These buildings when finished will be of the most substantial character, fully fitted for all the wants of the inmates, very architectural and beautiful in design. They will make, together with the grounds, one of the finest ornamental places which adorn any city of the United States.

The board have felt justified in putting considerable expense into the architectural character of the buildings of this establishment, and in their ornamentation, in consideration of the munificent donation of the ladies of the city of Milwaukee of nearly \$100,000 toward the purchase of the grounds and the erection of the buildings.

Owing to the unfinished state of the buildings and the want of room, it has not been possible to provide fully, as will be done in the future, for the instruction of the men in trades and in branches of education to fit them for out-of-door life, or for religious instruction, to the extent that is intended.

Notwithstanding the disadvantages under which the institution labors, there have been supported or aided there during the past year 372 men.

This branch is in charge of Deputy Governor Major Theodore C. Yates, who is active and vigilant in the case of the inmates under his charge.

#### SOLDIERS SUPPORTED IN STATE AND OTHER HOMES.

It will have been observed that out of nearly 4,000 men supported by the aid of the asylum during the past year only about one-half have been actual inmates of the several permanent branches. When the national asylum was first established it was believed that few soldiers

would take advantage of its provisions, that most of the disabled soldiers would be cared for otherwheres, and it seemed doubtful expediency for the board to erect buildings for homes for disabled soldiers which might never be occupied and expend the funds intrusted to our charge in establishments which might never remunerate their cost to the government; but we have found in practice that the calls upon us were much greater than we could supply by great diligence in construction, and new buildings have been required to be erected year by year. And the misfortune of the fire at Augusta, where we were prepared to take care of some 500 soldiers at a time, increased this difficulty.

In giving the whole number of soldiers aided or supported by the board, it must not be understood that by any means that number are in our institutions at any one time. Substantially none come to us who are able to support themselves elsewhere because of sickness or disability. None are received who are not totally disabled from obtaining their living by their own labors when received. Many under the nourishing diet and care of our surgeons recover their health and strength so far as to be able to go out into the world and try to support themselves with the aid of their pensions. Some leave us to be aided by friends. Some come to us afflicted with incurable diseases only to die. Many having learned useful trades, such as telegraphy, book-keeping, and the like, have found honorable and profitable situations to support themselves. Some can earn their living through the summer, but must come to us for aid in the winter, so that altogether we have only about two-thirds of the whole number supported or aided at any one time. While we have been preparing our buildings we have found it necessary to support a large number of those having claims upon the asylum in several State homes and other charitable institutions, and for that purpose we have established a temporary branch at Philadelphia, availing ourselves of the beneficence of the good people of that city who have very largely aided us in this work, and in that institution a majority of the cases being such as can be treated in hospitals only, there have been aided and supported there 702 men. We have also established a temporary branch at Rochester, New York, where we have supported or aided 108 men. We have also supported or aided at the New Jersey Soldiers' Home at Newark, during the year, 409 men; and at the New York State Home at Albany, 263 men; at Knightstown, Indiana, 210 men; and at Baltimore, Maryland, 78 men.

We have been able to support these men outside of our own asylums, under the clause of the act which enables us to give out-door relief where, in the judgment of the board, it may be deemed expedient. Except in the Philadelphia home, we have paid for the support of these men at the rate of forty cents per day for those not treated in hospitals and seventy-five cents per day for those actually so treated. It has been a necessity for this to be done, because of the unfinished state of our buildings and the necessity of the immediate care of these disabled men.

Upon most mature consideration and the fullest trial, the board are of unanimous opinion that as early as practicable this practice of supporting men at State and like institutions must be relinquished, and all men who require support according to the rules of the asylum ought to be brought into its own establishments, and there cared for; and it is the intention of the board as fast as practicable to remove to its several branches all disabled soldiers, with the few exceptions to be hereafter noted, to whom it extends aid. The reasons for this action, among others which we have found on investigation, are that all these homes

are in cities of greater or less extent, so that the soldier is much exposed to temptations to vice, of which intemperance and unchasteness are most common; and we find in our hospitals many men sorely afflicted with diseases arising from these causes in addition to the wounds and disabilities received in the line of their duty, and, however much such men may err, we are bound to remember their prior services to their country. Again, these institutions can have no control over their inmates to enforce such discipline as may be for their own good. Their stay at these homes being but temporary they can have no lasting employment provided for them, and it is found by observation that some of them spend their days in asking charity in the streets, which is spent worse than uselessly, they coming to their homes at night only to sleep.

All the branches of the asylum have territorial jurisdiction ceded to the United States over their grounds, and the men and officers are entirely under our control. They have been purposely located at a distance from cities, and our discipline, while it is as mild as it can well be, is adapted to keeping the men out of the way of temptation, by giving them employment, and preserving their health. Of course we can compel no disabled man to come to us from the State homes, but we can withdraw all support from them till they so do; and we believe such institutions will not be long supported by the munificence of States or the charity of individuals when it is found that their effect is to harm rather than aid the soldiers; especially when the nation, as is its duty to do, has made ample provision for the care of every one of her disabled soldiers who may choose to ask for it and obey the rules adopted to subserve the common good of all.

#### OUT-DOOR RELIEF.

By the section of the act already referred to, the board of managers are authorized, when in their judgment it may be best, to administer out-door relief at a cost not exceeding that of the support of a soldier in the asylum. As this relief can as a rule only apply to soldiers whose disabilities entitle them to a pension fixed by law, an indiscriminate distribution of out-door relief by the board would be only to add so much to the pensions already granted in pursuance of law; and, therefore, in administering this part of their trust the board have been very chary in giving relief in this form, except where we have supported men in other asylums pending the erection of our own. The class of cases where out-door relief is given, is where the soldier cannot be removed to the asylum, and cannot be cared for by his relations who are poor, as in the case of a wife supporting him and the children by her needle, and the soldier is unable to aid in supporting the family; or in case of a soldier having employment and being deprived of it, to support him for a time to enable him to get another situation; or in cases where the soldier is afflicted with incurable disease rapidly drawing his life to a close. In these and like cases the board has extended out-door relief for longer or shorter periods, and with very beneficial results. We should report more at large upon this subject, but it has received full consideration in a former report accompanied by statistics, to which reference may be had.

#### DISCIPLINE.

One of the most difficult subjects of our administration is the preservation of discipline, although the board has the power by act of Congress to enforce the strictest discipline of military law. With exceptions, very few indeed, when the soldier is tempted to evade the restrictions of the asylum to get liquor, or maddened or besotted by its use, we

have found little difficulty in enforcing the most perfect discipline without any considerably repressive measures. There is no temptation so strong to the soldier to err as the appetite for drink. He will sell the clothing furnished by government to shield him from the rigors of mid-winter, and it is a lamentable fact that there are sharks and harpies to take from him even that species of property, and give him liquor in exchange. It is true we have perfect control to punish the soldier, and the remedy at any time of expelling him from the asylum, for such conduct, but it is very doubtful whether there is any law to reach the fiendish criminal who tempts him to his destruction. This subject is of such importance that the board respectfully ask Congress to pass laws of great penal severity against those who thus receive the clothing furnished by the government for the use of the disabled soldier. It is theft in fact, with every aggravation that can characterize that crime, and should be punished as such. In some of the States stealing the smallest article at a fire is punished with the utmost severity, because in the confusion, the terror and alarm of the occasion, property must necessarily be exposed without all usual protections thrown around it. The attention of men is drawn to stop the ravages of the destructive element, and perhaps to the saving the lives of those in danger, and loss and ruin are impending upon the unhappy sufferers. Whoever, taking advantage of the occasion, suffers his cupidity to tempt him to add to the loss of those so afflicted, is, and ought to be, punished as an enemy to mankind. So in the case of the disabled soldier cared for by the government. Obedient and happy in his home, whoso shall tempt him with liquor to sell the clothes loaned him by the munificence of the government to shield him from the inclemency of the weather, and specially to give him that therefor which exposes him to punishment, and possibly to loss of home, ought to suffer the severest penalties of the law. In such cases even it is difficult to deal hardly with the soldier. We know the difficulties under which he labors and the temptations to which he is exposed; perhaps his army life has brought upon him the habit which is destroying him, and we cannot forget that he is disabled by injuries in his country's service. And so as a rule we have dealt tenderly with him, and expulsion has only been resorted to when this fault was complicated with others which show depravity as well as imprudence.

Another source of trouble in discipline is the restlessness of the soldier. While we are doing everything we can do to make his home cheerful and pleasant, and to throw into it every attraction, yet the soldier having lived for four years a life of excitement and change, now separated from his friends—perhaps from his wife and children—by his necessities becomes restless, and desiring a change, reports to the governor of his home that he is able to take care of himself, and that he will be no further charge upon the institution. Under such representations, where there is reasonable cause to believe them true, the soldier is discharged, and if his conduct has been exemplary he is furnished with a handsomely engraved certificate of honorable discharge, which should be a recommendation for employment. It is found, however, in practice that the desire to change frequently causes the soldier to overrate or misrepresent his ability to take care of himself, and after a few months' absence he is found either applying for charity, or having wandered into some State home or charitable institution, again applying for admission, adding to the expenses of the institution the amount necessary for his transportation.

In conclusion, the board congratulate Congress and the country as to the working of this munificent and noble measure of relief. It is doing

much good to those who have lost all save life itself in the public service, and more justice to the soldier. They have earned the right to be supported and cared for by their country, they themselves assisting to aid in this support as much as they may reasonably be able to do. The expenses of the institution have been very considerable, but are being gradually reduced so that the board think they may point with a reasonable degree of pride to a profitable and necessary expenditure in the erection of our buildings and careful and economical expenditure in our daily expenses.

All which is respectfully submitted.

BENJ. F. BUTLER,  
*For the Board of Managers.*

*The National Asylum for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers in account with the acting treasurer.*

DR.

1869.

Jan. 1. To amount paid for account of eastern branch for purchase of real estate, construction and repairs of buildings, purchase of personal property, for current expenses, as subsistence, clothing for beneficiaries, medical supplies, officers' salaries, pay-rolls of employés, and for incidental expenses.	\$113,637 79
To amount paid for account of central branch for purchase of real estate, construction and repairs of buildings.....	205,000 00
To amount paid for account of central branch for purchase of personal property, for current expenses, as subsistence, clothing, medical supplies, officers' salaries, pay-rolls of employés, and for incidental expenses.....	171,355 62
To amount paid for account of northwestern branch, for purchase of real estate, construction and repairs of buildings, purchase of personal property, for current expenses, as subsistence, clothing, medical supplies, officers' salaries, pay-rolls of employés, and incidental expenses.....	215,000 00
To amount paid by board of managers, viz:	
Out-door relief and State homes.....	53,541 01
Travelling expenses of board and officers' expenses, sundries .....	10,130 93
Transportation of disabled soldiers .....	927 71
To investment:	
Paid for \$161,500 (registered 5-20)..	\$176,438 75
7-30 coupons.....	755 55
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To balance due National Asylum by the acting treasurer .....	5,959 37
Total .....	<hr/> <hr/> 952,746 72

## CR.

1869.

Jan. 1. By amount of over-due coupons on \$10,350 7-30 bonds donated to National Asylum.....	\$755 55
By amount received for interest on investment reduced to currency.....	75,086 19
By amount received by drafts from United States treasury .....	876,904 98
Total .....	<u>952,746 72</u>

*To Major General B. F. Butler, president of the Board of Managers of the National Asylum for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers:*

I have the honor to submit the following statistics, gathered from the reports of the governors of the five branches of our asylum, and from the returns made by the superintendents of the several soldiers' homes supported or aided by our board, showing the work done by the National Asylum for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers during the year commencing November 1, 1867, and ending November 1, 1868.

*Whole number of disabled soldiers and sailors supported or aided during the year.*

Central Asylum, Dayton, Ohio .....	1,249
Eastern Branch, Augusta, Maine .....	343
Northwestern Branch, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.....	372
Philadelphia branch, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania .....	702
Rochester Branch, Rochester, New York.....	108
New Jersey Soldiers' Home, Newark, New Jersey.....	459
New York Soldiers' Home, Albany, New York.....	263
Indiana Soldiers' Home, Knightstown, Indiana .....	210
Maryland Soldiers' Home, Baltimore, Maryland .....	78
By out-door relief by L. B. Gunckel.....	88
By out-door relief by other managers .....	45
Total number cared for or aided during the year.....	<u>3,917</u>

The number of beneficiaries now in the several asylums and homes is perhaps one-third less than the numbers given above; some of those so counted have died during the year; many others, under the treatment of skilful surgeons and careful nurses, have been restored to health and honorably discharged; others have been qualified, in our asylum schools, and as school teachers, book-keepers, clerks, telegraph operators, &c., are now commanding good salaries outside of the institutions; others have learned new trades, suited to their peculiar disabilities, and are now earning their own living as mechanics, and a few others have, for repeated and flagrant violations of the rules of the asylum, been dishonorably discharged.

Of the whole number so cared for during the year, 120 belonged to the regular army, 54 belonged to the navy, and 3,742 belonged to the volunteer service.



## DISABILITY.

Their disability, so far as reported, was as follows:

Loss of both arms.....	6
Loss of both legs.....	12
Loss of a leg and one arm.....	5
Loss of one arm.....	395
Loss of one leg.....	479
Disabled by other wounds.....	1,135

Total number disabled by wounds received in the service..	2,032
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At the Central asylum there are 114 men with only one arm, and 159 with one leg only—a greater number of one-armed and one-legged men, it is believed, than was ever before assembled in one institution.

Blind, the most of them totally.....	197
Insane, totally or partially.....	46

## HOSPITAL DISEASES.

Whole number treated in hospital during the year .....	1,331
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Of these, there were treated for—

Consumption .....	288
Chronic diarrhœa .....	114
Chronic rheumatism.....	160
Old wounds and injuries.....	236
Paralysis .....	50
Epilepsy .....	46
Dysentery.....	41
Disease of the heart.....	33
Asthma .....	20
Chronic bronchitis .....	25
Hemorrhage .....	17
Hernia .....	17
Dropsy .....	8
Pneumonia .....	24
Ulcers .....	72
Other acute diseases .....	41
Other chronic diseases, &c.....	59

## DEATHS.

There have died during the year 132, and of the diseases following:

Consumption, (being over 60 per cent. of the whole).....	80
Chronic diarrhœa .....	5
Paralysis .....	3
Scrofula .....	3
Heart disease .....	3
Inflammation of brain.....	2
Inflammation of bowels .....	1
Inflammation of stomach .....	1
Cystitis.....	1

Psoas abscess .....	1
Typhoid pneumonia .....	5
Epilepsy .....	4
Asthma .....	1
General anasarca .....	1
Old wounds, &c. ....	2

## AGES.

Of those reported, the ages are as follows:

Under the age of 20 .....	43
Between the ages of 20 and 30 .....	1,208
Between 30 and 50 .....	1,506
Between 50 and 70 .....	531
Over the age of 70 .....	23

## DOMESTIC RELATIONS.

Of the whole number aided during the year, there were married, with wives or minor children still living, 601.

## NATIVITY.

Of those reported, there were—

Native born .....	1,410
Foreign born .....	2,002

In a few cases, the reports are imperfect or deficient in some of the particulars named above, which must account for the discrepancies found in this summary.

It is gratifying to note that out of 67 forms of disease treated in the hospitals at Dayton, Augusta, and Milwaukee, there was not one single case of endemic disease, nor one of malarious disease originating in the asylum—the best possible proof of the healthfulness of the localities selected by the board for its permanent asylums.

Respectfully submitted.

LEWIS B. GUNCKEL,  
*One of the Managers and Secretary of the Board.*